

In the past two years, the administration has executed two rounds of defense cuts, with the masthead of another likely on the way as part of an agreement to lift the debt ceiling. With growing readiness problems and a generation of military modernization either cut or on the chopping-block, we are now facing a \$400-\$900 billion defense cut looming over the horizon.

While our armed forces are charged with defending our national security, it is the Congress' responsibility to provide them with the resources to accomplish the tasks we set for them. Our men and woman in uniform diligently execute these tasks.

It is time for the Congress to do its job and provide adequately for the common defense.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, July 26, 1990, 21 years ago today, was a great day in our Nation's history. When President George Herbert Walker Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, we could see the future before us, full of possibility and opportunity for people with disabilities. It was one of the proudest days of my legislative career.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is one of the landmark civil rights laws of the 20th century—a long-overdue emancipation proclamation for Americans with disabilities. The ADA has played a huge role in making our country more accessible, in raising the expectations of people with disabilities about what they can hope to achieve at work and in life, and in inspiring the world to view disability issues through the lens of equality and opportunity.

In these times of often bitter political partisanship, it is valuable to remember that passage of the original Americans with Disabilities Act was a robustly bipartisan effort. As chief sponsor of the ADA in the Senate, I worked very closely with Senator Bob Dole and others on both sides of the aisle. We received invaluable support from President George Herbert Walker Bush and key members of his administration, including White House counsel Boyden Gray, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, and Transportation Secretary Sam Skinner. Other Members of Congress also played critical roles in passing the ADA—first and foremost, Senator Ted Kennedy; but also Senator ORRIN HATCH, and Representatives Tony Coelho, STENY HOYER, Major Owens, and Steve Bartlett.

Before the ADA, life was very different for folks with disabilities in Iowa and across the country. Being an American with a disability meant not being able to ride a bus because there was no lift, not being able to attend a concert or ballgame because there was no accessible seating, and not being able to cross the street in a wheelchair because there were no curb cuts. In short, it meant not being able to work or participate in community life. Discrimination was both commonplace and accepted.

Since then, we have seen amazing progress. The ADA literally trans-

formed the American landscape by requiring that architectural and communications barriers be removed and replaced with accessible features such as ramps, lifts, curb cuts, widening doorways, and closed captioning. More importantly, the ADA gave millions of Americans the opportunity to participate in their communities. We have made substantial progress in advancing the four goals of the ADA—equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

But despite this progress, we still have more work to do. One of the critical challenges we still need to address is the persistently low employment rates among Americans with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, less than a third of working-age people with disabilities—around 4 million individuals—are currently employed.

This is shameful, and we need to do better. In April, at a disability employment summit, I challenged the employer representatives in the room to work to increase the size of the disability labor force by 1 million individuals by 2015. Tom Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, endorsed this goal and encouraged his colleagues to meet or exceed the 1 million number because “it’s a good thing to do, and it’s good for business.”

But if we are going to get serious about growing the size of the disability work force, we need to start by recognizing that people with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the bad economy. Compared to the general workforce, in the last 2 years, adults with disabilities have left the labor force at a rate six times the rate of adults without disabilities.

I am committed to doing everything within my power to turn these trends around, and to increase employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

If all of us—Members of Congress, business leaders, employers, and people with disabilities—work together, I believe that we can meet the goal of 1 million new workers with disabilities—and ensure that all individuals with disabilities have real opportunities for employment that meet their goals, interests, and high expectations.

I would like to take a brief moment on this ADA anniversary to remember a leader in the disability community who recently passed away—Max Starkloff.

Max, who acquired his disability at age 21, was a well-known advocate for disability rights, both in his hometown of St. Louis, MO, and nationally.

In the 1970s, while still living in a nursing home, Max founded Paraquad, which became one of the first Centers for Independent Living in this country. Max began his lifetime of advocacy for the rights and independence of people with disabilities long before the ADA, and continued it all the way up until his recent passing.

The examples of his advocacy are too numerous to catalogue, but here are a few examples:

In 1972, he convinced St. Louis officials to install curb cuts in sidewalks.

In 1977, Max's advocacy led to the use of lift-equipped buses in the St. Louis metro area.

In 1979, Max helped to integrate accessible design in an apartment complex that he and Paraquad opened in St. Louis, including counters that could be moved up and down to accommodate wheelchairs, wide doorways, and stoves that could be used by individuals with limited mobility.

Max, and his wife Colleen, worked tirelessly for the passage of the ADA in 1990.

In 1997, Max's advocacy over a two year period resulted in the St. Louis Zoo making their facilities accessible for all.

Most recently, Max devoted himself to an issue that is near and dear to my heart—improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Although Max Starkloff is no longer with us, his accomplishments and good work live on, and improve the lives of Missourians with disabilities on a daily basis.

So as we celebrate the anniversary of this great civil rights law, we take time to remember the remarkable progress that we have made in the past 21 years.

On July 26, 1990, when he signed ADA into law, President George Herbert Walker Bush spoke with great eloquence. And I will never forget his final words before taking up his pen. He said, “Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”

Mr. President, today, that wall is indeed falling. And we must join together, on a bipartisan basis, to continue this progress.

REMEMBERING OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to two law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty at the U.S. Capitol on July 24, 1998.

Thirteen years ago today, Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Michael Gibson each of whom had spent 18 years on the Capitol Police force, lost their lives while safeguarding the Capitol against an armed, emotionally disturbed individual. As a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives at this time, I interacted with these officers on a regular basis. Their tragic, violent deaths profoundly affected us all.

We want these officers' family members and friends to know that these two fine police officers did not die in vain; if not for their courageous and immediate response, many more innocent people could have been injured or killed on that day in 1998.

On this date, we take a moment to remember the sacrifice made by these